

REMARKS

Claims 1-24 were pending in the application at the time of the Office Action. The Office Action set forth a restriction requirement asserting that the claims cover two distinct inventions as identified by the following groups of claims:

- Group I: Claims 1-15 and 18-24, drawn to an explosive cartridge; and
- Group II: Claims 16 and 17, drawn to a method of charging an explosive borehole.

Applicant hereby elects without traverse Group I containing claims 1-15 and 18-24 for prosecution on the merits. As such, claims 16 and 17 have been cancelled herein.

The Office Action also set forth a couple of election requirements. Specifically, if above Group I containing claims 1-15 and 18-24 was elected, the applicant was required to elect one of the following alternative piercing member species:

Species 1A: wherein the socket and spigot members each comprise a piercing member comprising at least one axially extending blade (claim 6) or

Species 1B: wherein the socket and spigot members each include a piercing member comprising a pair of diametrically opposed blades (claim 7) or

Species 1C: wherein the socket and spigot members each comprise a piercing member comprising a sharpened edge to cut the sealing member of an adjacent cartridge (claim 8) or

Species 1D: wherein the socket and spigot members each comprise a piercing member adapted to tear the membrane during coupling of respective socket and spigot members (claim 9).

The applicant hereby elects without traverse Species 1A corresponding to claim 6. As such, claims 7-9 are herein withdrawn from consideration.

The applicant was also required to elect between the following coupling member species:

Species 1E: wherein the coupling members are secured to the tubular body by fusion or by an adhesive composition (claim 10) or

Species 1F: wherein the coupling members are secured to the tubular body by mechanical engagement therewith (claim 11 and 12)

Applicant hereby elects without traverse Species 1E corresponding to claim 10. As such, claims 11 and 12 are herein withdrawn from consideration.

Finally, the applicant was required to choose between the following mounting collar species:

Species 1G: wherein the mounting collar comprises a retaining band of adjustable length to accommodate tubular explosive cartridges of varying diameters (claim 19) or

Species 1H: wherein the mounting collar comprises a circular member adapted for frictional engagement on an outer surface of the explosive cartridge (claim 20) or

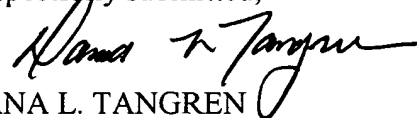
Species 1I: wherein the mounting collar comprises a circular member slidably securable over the outer surface of the explosive cartridge, the collar being anchored to the cartridge by engagement of the detonator extending into the interior region of the cartridge (claim 21).

Applicant hereby elects without traverse Species 1I corresponding to claim 21. As such, claims 19 and 20 are herein withdrawn from consideration.

In view of the foregoing, claims 1-15 and 18-24 are now pending in the application with claims 7-9, 11-12, and 19-20 being withdrawn from consideration. Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner's reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims. Should the Examiner find any impediment to allowance of the claims which could be clarified in a telephonic interview, the Examiner is respectfully requested to initiate such an interview with the undersigned.

Dated this 15th day of March 2006.

Respectfully submitted,



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